



HIGHWAY SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

MAY 8, 2014

1:00 PM

**POLICE DEPARTMENT – BRAD CROSS
ROOM**

Attendees: Chief Mark E. Doyle, Bob L’Heureux, Paul Konieczka, Finlay Rothhaus, Fran L’Heureux, Tom Touseau, Glenn Wallace. Kyle Fox and Chief Michael Currier 1:30pm.

Excused Absence: Tim Thompson

Guest: Jillian Harris, Community Development, for Tim Thompson

Ken Clinton, Meridian Land Services and John Tenhave, Northview Homes representing the Chestnut Hill Subdivision project.

Note Taker: Claire Rioux

Chairman Doyle called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m.

Chairman Doyle called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Meeting Minutes:

A motion to approve the minutes of June 24, 2013 was made by Bob L’Heureux, seconded by Fran L’Heureux with the following amendment: pages 6, Bob L’Heureux, under ADA Compliance 1st sentence, delete “the”.

Abstained: Finlay Rothhaus, Glenn Wallace, Absent: Tim Thompson, Motion carried.

Old business:

- Request submitted by Jennifer Page, 3 Nichols Lane, Merrimack, regarding placing a crosswalk from Bramber Estates to Lilac Ct. (on Bedford Rd)/ Chairman Chief Doyle

Chairman Doyle:

We have not been able to contact Ms. Page for this meeting. At this time, this is the only request submitted for a cross walk in this area. It is not clear if she is speaking for anyone else who lives in this area. Across the street, at Bramber Estates, there is an existing crosswalk, the new

crosswalk would meet the existing one. There may be some restrictions in this area. I suggest that this item be tabled in order to receive feedback from Ms. Page.

Motion:

Motion by Bob L'Heureux and seconded by Fran L'Heureux to table the above item so that we can have Ms. Page present to the committee at a future meeting. Motion passed 7-0-0

- **Re-appointments to the Committee/ Chief Doyle**

Chairman Doyle:

Stated that the Highway Safety Committee has 3 positions for reappointment. Does anyone have any discussion relative to any of the members? Since there is no discussion regarding the reappointments we will vote on these nominations one at a time.

1. Paul Konieczka term is due to expire on 6/30/2014, the re-appointment term will expire 6/30/2015. (one year term)

On a motion of Bob L'Heureux and duly seconded by Finlay Rothhaus the nomination of Paul Konieczka was accept and carried with 1 abstention, Paul Konieczka 9-0-1.

2. Glenn Wallace, term is due to expire 6/30/2014; re-appointment term will expire 6/30/2015. (one year term)

On a motion of Bob L'Heureux and duly seconded by Paul Konieczka the nomination of Glenn Wallace was accept and carried with 1 abstention, Glenn Wallace 9-0-1.

3. Fran L'Heureux, term is due to expire 6/30/2014; re-appointment term will expire 6/30/2016. (two year term)

On a motion of Paul Konieczka and duly seconded by Finlay Rothhaus the nomination of Fran L'Heureux was accept and carried with 2 abstentions Fran L'Heureux, Bob L'Heureux 8-0-2

Chairman Doyle:

As you are all aware we have a 3 year position open on this board, Norm Pepin passed away last fall. If you know of anyone that is interested in a position, please forward a letter of interest to me. I would like to have nominations to be considered at the next meeting. Notices will be placed on the web, Town Hall, and press.

Chairman Doyle:

We will proceed to the “new Business” item of the Chestnut Hill subdivision and return to the agenda after this presentation.

- Tractor Supply parking lot ----ADA Compliance

Chairman Doyle:

Read a memo from Tim Thompson, AICP, Community Development Director, regarding ADA compliance. The Community Development department also received a letter from Mr. Terrell, who serves on the State Committee for the Handicap, listing several of his concerns. Photos were taken of all the areas of concerns and forwarded to Tim Thompson and Chief Michael Currier. A review occurred with recommendations to be in compliance. The list of business are: Gold's Gym, Dunkin Donuts South, Tractor Supply, 308 DW Highway Cleaners, 515 DW Dunkin Donuts.

I also spoke to Hackman Management who manages "The Commons". They are on board in keeping the handicap spacing in compliance, and will be making their handicap signs permanent and up to code.

As of March 4, 2014, all areas mentioned are in compliance according to the memo from the building community development departments.

- Chestnut Hill Subdivision, regarding the proposed connection from the Old Blood Road subdivision to Madeline Bennett Lane, Meridian Land Service/Kyle Fox.

Ken Clinton, Meridian Land Services, and John Tenhave, Northview Homes had been introduced, to discuss the new subdivision being built behind Merrymeeting Drive.

Chairman Doyle:

An invitation was sent to Matthew Shevenell, Merrimack School Business Administrator and Richard Desmond, Transportation Coordinator to attend this meeting. They have met with me already regarding this design, and they did express safety concerns.

Ken Clinton, Meridian Land Services:

I am here to discuss the proposed road for a cluster subdivision of 71 lots, 200 acres, comprised of 8 to 10 tax map lots. This particular subdivision has been in the works since 2004. The internal road configuration is fairly straight forward. There are two connecting points, one being the connection at the cul-de-sac at Madeline Bennett and the southerly connection at Old Blood. The objective today is to discuss the design of the 2 roads and there connectivity.

Old Blood Road is a class 6 road, not maintained by the town. In 1976 this road was designated as a 60 ft. wide, right of way, making good connectivity, for the school. In 1979, Merrymeeting Drive subdivision created their own internal right of way. What is interesting about this plan is that a provision for widening Old Blood Road was planned. The creations of buffers for

Merrymeeting homeowner were included in the planning for a future road. In 2000 the town acquired the Bishop lots; these lots are not buildable due to wetland impact. In the conversion easement there is language to update Old Blood road as the town saw fit.

Chairman Doyle:

Because of wetlands, Madeline Bennett was built out of the pre-existing right of way.

Ken Clinton:

Yes.

Madeline Bennett Road is not presently accepted as a town road. There are conditions of approval; the sewer design will have to be approved. The town does maintain this road, but it is not accepted as a town road. We feel what we are proposing is the best road design, it has three lanes designating the center lane for emergency vehicles.

Fran L'Heureux:

Has a traffic study of this area been completed?

Ken Clinton:

Counts are done, traffic patterns have been observed. In the morning, traffic is spread out and staggered, which is less of a problem. The afternoon is more problematic. It is in 2 phases, 17-18 buses for each phase. Phase 1 busses stack within the property itself, the 2nd stacks on the town road.

Chairman Doyle:

The major concern that the school has is twofold, first is the design of the stop line. Either way you enter the development you have to yield to traffic that may be in the intersection. This design may cause the higher proclivity of an accident. Second, the stop sign may result in a domino effect, queuing the buses, leaving the school to go down to the high school. The result could cause an additional 20 minutes to the drop off and pickups.

My question is, why would it be, that the traffic coming out of school would have to stop and not the other way around? Should there be stop signs or lights to regulate traffic to accommodate the traffic during school hours.

Ken Clinton:

My understanding is that the school wants the buses to be free flowing. As far as the timing goes the buses have to come to a stop now, and go through a light cycle. To add a 3 to 5 second stop is not going to substantially delay their routing. The extra stop does not impact them for 20 minutes.

Chairman Doyle:

Would a traffic light be a safer alternative? In my experience people are more compliant with a traffic light rather than a sign. Have you considered a traffic light in this area?

Ken Clinton:

No, I have not; I do not think that it would be the best for this design and area.

Finley Rothhaus:

I do not know how the traffic pattern will be; currently we have someone directing traffic for a short period of time in other areas. We are not looking to have another individual to monitor traffic.

Fran L'Heureaux:

I agree, with the chief, I think there should be a stop light there, it is a safety issue.

Chairman Doyle:

How about a flashing red light in addition to the stop sign?

Ken Clinton:

As far as the peak period 1:50 -2:10 the busses arrive at, 2:18 to 2:25. The second groups of busses leave; we are talking 20- 25 minutes. It is the afternoon that is the focus. If the town felt that some kind of traffic officer is needed.....

Chairman Doyle:

That would be a budgetary concern to have a traffic person there in the afternoon.

My concern about the design is how it benefits the parents and kids going to the school. The middle school will be coming out, the new development, along with kids coming home from high school, will be going through this intersection, at the worst possible time. Another concern would be that someone may think that this would be a short cut to the north /south end of town. I would like to see something engineered into the design to heighten the safety issue making it more conducive to the area.

Ken Clinton:

We did consider the short cut potential; we found that this is not a shortcut at all, and a stop sign would not be best in this area.

Chairman Doyle:

Would a traffic light, that is a three way stop, timing to be adjusted for the afternoon busses, be of benefit? So far I cannot see anything that regulates the coming and going of cars in the development.

Kyle Fox:

What would be helpful is when you leave the school; think of it like you are leaving a driveway.

Traffic signal warrants are not met in this area. It is not customary for the Department of Public Works to place traffic lights that do not comply with the federal manual standards. In addition the cost will have to be taken into consideration, traffic lights need electricity. Data reveals that, it is found that lights that work 20 minutes a day, not the normal 24 hrs., result in numerous people ignoring the signal. A comparison you could draw from is, Lyons Road. Reeds Ferry School has the same configuration, which is a stop control intersection.

Bob L'Heureux:

Could we consider a 3 way stop sign?

Kyle Fox:

This certainly could be done.... This is a planning board issue.

Finlay Rothhaus:

If this proposal were to go forward, and the committee thought it would be best to have a 3 way stop sign, this could be added.

Kyle Fox:

This area does not warrant the extra stop sign, as you are aware, as a committee, if we decided it would be a traffic calming device we could recommend a stop sign.

Chief Michael Currier:

Are the people really going to pay attention to a right hand turn? The placement of the sign may not be the best.

Glenn Wallace:

Will the kids in the new development be able to walk to school?

Ken Clinton:

There is a proposed sidewalk.

Glenn Wallace:

Where will they cross?

Ken Clinton:

That has not been determined as of yet, we need to finalize the alignment of the intersection and receive approval first.

Glenn Wallace:

There is not enough access to the neighborhood on Wilson Hill Road.

Ken Clinton:

The proper planning of connectivity started in the 70's, 2 access points were proposed. (ZBA overall plan). Water and sewer updates have to be completed. A month ago the Planning Board proposed the need of a secondary access point. This configuration (pointing to the board) is better than lights.

Paul Konieczka:

My company will be involved in the review of this project and my comments today are my personal observations, they are not official comments. I am concerned about the cut through traffic. There is nothing between Wilson Hill Road; people will get to the light, and take the back road, causing more traffic on the road then what we are proposing. People may come to the light and decide to take the back road to get to the western part of Merrimack, causing a lot more traffic on the road.

Ken Clinton:

We did do traffic counts, the distance is a straight shot if you were to use Old Blood Road. It would not make sense to use this as a short cut.

Kyle Fox:

Ken and I conducted traffic counts on different days and the count totals were about the same, there was no substantial difference in the findings.

Chief Michael Currier:

The 4 stop signs on Old Blood will not be a quicker route; it is not a straight through

Chairman Doyle:

The Planning Board recommended that you present this proposal to this committee, what are you looking for from us?

Ken Clinton:

We currently have several staff endorsements. We wanted to present our plan, which is the safest route, and receive your endorsement.

Chairman Doyle:

I would recommend that we table this for a June meeting so that the committee can view the location for discussion.

I will forward the concerns from the school meeting to the committee in preparations for the June meeting.

Finlay Rothhaus:

I am comfortable with the proposal. I think the right turn will work nicely with the busses and for the parents. The traffic comes in on the right lane, parents and buses will all be making that right turn. How the traffic flow will impact this area, for that short period of time is yet to be seen. We could have someone direct traffic for a short period of time if need be.

Motion:

Motion by Bob L'Heureux and seconded by Fran L'Heureux to table the above item to be addressed and finalized at the June meeting so that committee members can review the site and bullet points from the Chiefs meeting with the School. All in favor. 10-0-0

Action Items:

Kyle Fox will notify Ken Clinton and John Tenhave of the time and date of the next meeting.

Kyle Fox will research if this area is an enforceable school zone speed limit.

Old business continued:

- Request by Tim White of 3 Chapel Lane, requesting the committee to look into the possibility of installing a no parking sign on the south side of Chapel Lane across from his driveway (in front of the green fence)/ Kyle Fox

Chief Michael Currier:

Upon visiting the site in question, an evaluation was made. The person who is living across from the Church (Mr. White) does have difficulties, driving in or out of his driveway, when cars are parked in the road. My recommendation is to have the church monitor the parking. It will be the church's responsibility to make sure that the parishioners cars are not parked in front of the home of Mr. White. Traffic cones should be placed in that area to assure there is no parking in Mr.

White's driveway. Church parking does make the area difficult. My recommendation is that the town should not place "no parking signs" in this area.

Chairman Doyle:

I have been in the area when the church is having events. There is no problem with the parking in the road when cones are in place. In the winter, snow banks in the roadway will make the road a little more difficult, especially for emergency vehicles.

Chief Michael Currier:

Fire apparatus can come in 2 different ways, for emergencies.

Action Item:

A letter to the Church will be generated advising them of the committees concerns.

- Safety concerns on Wilson Hill Road/ Michael Redding

Chairman Doyle:

Read the email for Michael Redding into the record.

I am writing in response to an accident that occurred tonight on Wilson Hill Rd. (103 at the corner that we discussed). This corner continues to present a hazard and I am concerned that a fatality is inevitable.

Kyle Fox:

I received the email from Mr. Redding, regarding an accident that happened on Wilson Hill Rd. and his safety concern on a portion of Wilson Hill Rd.

Chairman Doyle:

The design of the road at that section of Wilson Hill Road is difficult.

Kyle Fox:

There is no real signage in that area, I can look into this further. I also can look into placing warning arrow signs; this may also be an area for a street light, since this may be a safety issue when it is dark.

Motion:

Motion by Kyle Fox and seconded by Paul Konieczka to table the above item to be addressed at the next meeting allowing the committee to view the area in question. All in favor. 10-0-0

Action Item:

Chairman Doyle:

Mr. Redding should be invited to the next meeting so that we can entertain any of his concerns, as well as the committees.

New Business:

Chief Michael Currier:

The crosswalk at Mallard Point, is a concern. Kids and parents are walking between cars, drivers may not see them coming out between cars. Cars are also speeding on that road. Do crosswalks have hard fast rules?

Paul Konieczka:

Different states have a formula, the volume of people, is it in certain areas, such as schools, is this a regular occurrence?

Finlay Rothhaus:

If we are thinking of a crosswalk, I think it would be beneficial to have signage in the middle of the road. Crosswalks are not always noticeable; drivers will notice a sign in the middle of the road.

Kyle Fox:

This past year, Adam Jacobs, has been placing crosswalk signage throughout the town.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was voted to adjourn on a motion made by Fran L'Heureux and seconded by Paul Konieczka. Motion carries 10-0-0.

Meeting Adjourned 2:26 pm